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April 30, 2015

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Sachi A. Hamai
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors
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First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District

SHEILA KUEHL
Third District

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Fifth District

MOTION TO SUPPORT AB 530 (RENDON) AND INSTRUCT THE INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO PREPARE AND SEND A FIVE-SIGNATURE LETTER TO MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE COMMUNICATING THE BOARD'S SUPPORT OF THE BILL (ITEM NO. 5, AGENDA OF MAY 5, 2015)

Item No. 5 on the May 5, 2015 Agenda is a motion by Supervisor Solis to support AB 530 (Rendon), which would require the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency to appoint, in coordination with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, a local working group to develop a revitalization plan for the Lower Los Angeles River, and to instruct the Interim Chief Executive Officer to prepare and send a five-signature letter to members of the Legislature communicating the Board's support of the bill.

Background

The Los Angeles River is 51 miles long. Currently, the upper 32-mile stretch, which reaches from the San Fernando Valley to downtown Los Angeles and lies within the City of Los Angeles, has its own Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan which was released in 2007. The Lower Los Angeles River, the 19 miles of river that once it leaves downtown Los Angeles, flows through multiple cities until it reaches the Pacific Ocean at Long Beach Harbor does not have such a plan.

In July 1991, the Board of Supervisors directed the Departments of Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Regional Planning to undertake a planning effort and to coordinate all interested public and private parties in the planning, financing, and implementation

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efforts of a Master Plan for the Los Angeles River. The County of Los Angeles adopted a Master Plan for the entire Los Angeles River in 1996.

The Los Angeles River Master Plan Advisory Committee, which consists of approximately 50 members, including representatives from Federal, State, cities, local agencies, and environmental and community groups, formulated a multi-objective program for the Los Angeles River while recognizing its primary purpose of flood protection. Overall, the Master Plan advocates environmental enhancement, recreational opportunities, and economic development throughout the Los Angeles River and Tujunga Wash corridors.

AB 530 (Rendon)

AB 530 (Rendon), which as introduced on February 23, 2015, would require the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency to appoint, in coordination with the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, a local working group to develop a revitalization plan for the Lower Los Angeles River. The committee would include representatives from: Los Angeles County; elected officials of the cities that border the Lower Los Angeles River; the Gateway Cities County of Government; the Los Angeles Gateway Region Integrated Regional Water Management Joint Power Authority, and non-profit organizations servicing the Los Angeles River region. The San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy would be a member and staff the working group. On or before March 1, 2017, the working group must develop a revitalization plan that addresses the unique and diverse needs of the Lower Los Angeles River that is consistent with, enhances, and is incorporated into the County of Los Angeles' Master Plan. The plan must include watershed education programs that help communities recognize the value and the importance of protecting the River's watershed.

According to the bill's author, AB 530 would start a conversation about how to improve the Lower Los Angeles River in concert with the revitalization of the Upper Los Angeles River, so that the entire River watershed can be collaboratively managed.

The Department of Public Works (DPW) reports that in 2014, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, upon completion of its Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Study, recommended Alternative 20, a \$1.08 billion proposal to restore habitat, widen the river, create wetlands, and provide access points and bike trails to restore portions of the Upper Los Angeles River within the City of Los Angeles near Elysian Park.

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The Department of Public Works also indicates that in November 2014, the voter-approved Proposition 1, the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act authorized, upon appropriation by the Legislature, \$100.0 million combined to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, which has responsibility for the Upper Los Angeles River, and the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, which has responsibility for the Lower Los Angeles River. The funds are directed to fund projects that protect and enhance the entire Los Angeles River. DPW notes that the working group established under AB 530 would be eligible for Proposition 1 funds, as well as other public and private funding sources directed to the restoration of rivers, wetlands, or related amenities.

The Department of Public Works reports that under the provisions of AB 530, the County would play the lead role in bringing together all those who care about the Los Angeles River and its future, working in close collaboration with State agencies that have the resources to support the effort to restore the river. This would, in turn, help to ensure that future recreational-use opportunities along the Lower Los Angeles River within the publicly-owned right of way conform with flood protection and public safety priorities of the County.

Conclusion

This office and the Department of Public Works recommend support for AB 530.

Approval of this motion is consistent with existing Board-approved policy to support measures to promote the preservation and restoration of Los Angeles County's mountain, bay, watershed, river, oak woodlands, and wetland areas.

Support would also be consistent with the County's ongoing efforts to implement the Master Plan for the Los Angeles River, as well as the Los Angeles River Master Plan Advisory Committee's ongoing work.

SAH:MR
ACO:gl

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel